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easels and settling down for a good long period of real enjoyment, is apparent to any who have watched them work surrounded by admiring and critical crowds of all ages. Late in November three sculptors could have been seen studying the remarkable leaves of the Mexican horned poppy, possibly the most beautiful leaf that grows.

To those particularly interested in human nature, to those we mean to whom human nature makes an especial appeal, the Garden, called by hundreds "the loveliest spot in the Park," is a rare place in which to see the pleasanter side of each nature respond to this magic environment. The Garden Committee, which has been instrumental in retaining and maintaining the Garden has endeavored to have some of its members there during the hours upon holidays and Sundays when the crowds are greatest; and it is a matter of much interest to notice the different ways in which people respond to a pleasant or courteous remark regarding the flowers: the pleased surprise of some, the instant response of others, or the gradual thawing of reserve in the more conventional is like the unfoldment of an interesting story. In it one reads what the Garden means to each individual. To some it means renewal of past acquaintance with old familiar things; to some the revelation of a new kingdom; to others an opportunity for study and research; to many a relaxation and delight.

City people, especially New Yorkers, have remarkable opportunities for seeing flowers. The florist's windows would have seemed like dreams in fairyland to the past generation. Rare and wonderful blossoms are always on display. The Park greenhouses, too, show curious and exotic growths. The various societies exhibit their latest and proudest accomplishments, dahlias, roses, chrysanthemums. Few persons living out-of-town have ever seen a single chrysanthemum plant measuring sixteen feet in diameter, with over two thousand blossoms all in full flower at once. Yet many persons coming directly from the exhibition of such wonders into the Shakespeare Garden breathed

relief, for here was Nature's handiwork, and many persons feel here the speedy release which Nature gives to the artificiality of city life. Not only the lowly and unconsidered remark upon this matter, but many a great man and notable woman has recognized and freely expressed what the Shakespeare Garden means to them.

"Framed in the prodigality of nature" this charming spot never fails to affect the most indifferent observer. To the rich it gives easy access to loveliness. To the poor it is a wonderland, a miracle, in fact. It means to them the hedgerows of old England, byways in Spain, fields in *la belle* France, valleys in Italy, mountains in Switzerland, a sunny slope in Norway, open lands in Mexico. Natives of all lands and climes and continents can find here something from home. Imagine the effect of this! Think what it means to the farmer lad from Vermont, now a noted journalist, to find his boyhood wildflowers here on a day in early spring. Think what it means to a homesick girl from Kentucky to find a wallflower, just as in her grandmother's sweet-smelling garden at home. As Shakespeare has said: "It is a theme as fluent as the sea."

We can observe at best only a minimum of all the pleasure which this Garden gives to its thousands of friends. Upon this subject New Yorkers have been far from silent: witness the daily press teeming with letters from delighted garden visitors all through the garden season, and only the god of newspapers knows how many hundreds of letters found their way into editorial wastebaskets—crowded out by politics and war. Still it was pleasant and reassuring in days of stress that Editors were mindful of such simple homely matters as the people's interest in their Garden. It was a deep gratification to all who had labored to make and keep this garden. It was an inspiration, this kindly help from the press, whose motives are too commonly maligned. Its effect is incalculable.

"Join we together for the public good."

King Henry VI

THE ÆSTHETIC IDEAL

By FR. ROUSSEL-DESPIERRES

Translated from the French

BOOK II—CHAPTER I—*Continued*

TO love is a virtue. To make oneself loved is another virtue which completes it. And perhaps all the virtues are summed up in it; it presupposes all of them at least, because, if sometimes certain cross-currents draw aside capricious sympathies, what people love in us is kindness, intelligence, firmness; and, to say it in a word, the moral beauty one has believed will be found there;—the æsthetic virtues are the chains of love.

Do not object that first of all physical beauty conquers the heart. Who doubts that? Physical beauty is also a virtue which, though much the humbler, does not fail to offer a vigorous support to moral beauty.

It is a virtue, and perchance the loftiest and most necessary, to be beautiful.²⁸

To beautify oneself should be the constant task

of life. Beauty also is a habit, and if one tolerates in oneself a physical ugliness which one can attenuate, one shall not embellish one's soul. The passion

Note 28.—Happiness, love, beauty—three essential virtues.

Love is never a duty, since the heart is free, and only obeys its own attraction; but happiness, the condition of peace—but beauty, the ever-present ideal—are not these in some measure duties? Without question the one and the other will impose themselves upon individual consciences with the same evidence as duties, as soon as the latter have clearly understood how narrow and rigorous is the moral solidarity in human affairs. But one and the other can not fail to lose their seduction and in consequence their fruitfulness by being presented in the form of positive obligations. The feeling that creates virtue and that which duty dissolves is the great moral spring of mankind, and it is because morality only counts upon itself alone that it is prudent to reduce the list of virtues to the strictest needs of social life. Let us veil duty, let us point out the end!

for beauty is absolute and suffers through each ugliness. An artist will not produce a masterpiece until he has made of his brain a veritable temple of beauty. In practical life those only whose soul is truly beautiful accomplish good and beautiful actions. Action is only the reflex of the soul and it is impossible that low, tortuous and ugly acts shall proceed from a beautiful soul. Must we prove here that all morality is contained in beauty? Why, every immoral act is a degradation of life, thought, the ideal; therefore is it essentially ugly; and thus every one of us possesses in himself a very sure æsthetic criterion as to the immorality of acts. The beautiful being is that one who has pursued ceaselessly his ascent toward the Ideal. In truth the very definitions of beautiful and good are merged in the conception of æsthetic beauty. Beauty is the supreme dogma of morality.

We should not like, nevertheless, to connect this with a "Religion of Beauty." A religion presupposes a body of obligatory doctrines, rites imposed from without; and the æsthetic morality is a doctrine of liberty.

Liberty is all its method, and it is by that point—along with certain philosophical theories—that it separates itself most directly from religious systems and traditional morality.

This latter, and these others, in truth, base themselves upon two principles which exclude true liberty: obligation and sanction. Along with liberty, obligation and sanction reach morality itself. There is no longer a question for discussion in the radical immorality of a soul that devotes itself only to good from the prospect of an infinite repayment or before the threat of eternal punishment. A great number of minds have disengaged themselves from the idea of a sanction, but scarcely are there many who have freed themselves with the same resolution from the prejudice of an obligation. The ordinary belief of believers and unbelievers is dominated by a code of imperative prescriptions, which conscience sometimes condemns, but to which it always submits.

Here it is necessary to place an essential distinction between the moral law and the civil law. Civil law is an act of collective will; it includes the restriction of the individual conscience and that restriction finds so powerful a justification in social needs that whosoever disobeys the civil law, being a bad citizen, should be held to be an immoral person; in fact it is against morality itself that that such a man makes an attack by violating the civil law, respect for which is one of the elementary obligations of conduct. On the contrary, nothing less resembles a collective will than does the moral law; it has no other source and no other seat than individual conduct, and the man who disobeys his conscience in order to obey a convention, is immoral.²⁹

Note 29.—The conduct and opinions of the majority even of the united body of our fellow-citizens constitute neither the reasons nor the excuses fit to make us conform to them, whenever our conscience has judged that conduct to be bad and such opinions to be false. To follow the crowd is a worse thing than cowardice, it is a felony against one's self and a treason with regard to the Ideal. Insurrection against error and evil is by so much nobler and holier as the latter are more powerful. Ideas and morality can only make progress in the world by means of rebellion and refusal to bargain on the part of isolated consciences.

There exists a profound and irremediable opposition between the civil and the moral law. It is that very fact which explains their co-existence; if one and the other were nothing but the expression of general will, then morality might be formulated entirely in texts of the law and penal sanction could reach all wicked acts. If the civil law, while punishing so many acts disapproved by conscience, spares a certain number of them, the reason is that it recognizes exactly the existence of an inviolable domain belonging to the individual morality. One may say that the morality of a being never rises to greater heights than when, disengaging itself from vulgar prejudices or declaring itself in revolt against them, it accomplishes a resolution which in its conscience it has decided to be the best. And perhaps there scarcely exist cowardices of so base a sort as to accord to common opinion the concessions which our moral sentiment reproves.

The principle of obligation and the idea of sanction occasion another wrong to practical morality: they paralyze good will. Suppose an orator compelled in his speech to follow a plan of which he is not the author, or a sculptor condemned to execute a monument from a sketch imposed upon him. A hundred to one that such an orator and such a sculptor, both of them, will show themselves very inferior to their own worth! Only in full liberty do eloquence and artistic genius display themselves. For a long time now the spiritualistic philosophy has recognized how greatly the law of duty has need of that indefatigable aid-feeling.

"Reason" very justly remarked one of our recently deceased moralists, "reason gives me a rule; but it is passion that gives me movement."

Rules support only the weak wills; they embarrass wills that are healthy and vigorous. There is a principle of sterility in the rule. It may be prohibitive, but it has no inspirational virtue. Now moral activity is very well compared to artistic activity. It is inventive, it is creative. In order that will shall display itself it needs an unencumbered field and a precise goal to reach. There are two species of military courage: the motionless and in a way negative courage of the soldier who allows himself to be killed at his death-post; and the courage—dare I say the positive courage?—of the attack with the bayonet. Like courage, morality has a motionless and negative will and a positive will. It is in the latter that moral activity really shows itself. It admits of the appearance of the soldier who is marching to the attack. If it alone is fruitful, likewise it alone is educational. Tolstoi gravely mistakes when he affirms that before thinking of doing good it is necessary first to cease doing evil. Abstention does not reach action, and without question one can not unlearn evil save by endeavoring toward the good. The absence of evil is not the good, and on the contrary the good suppresses evil. Tolstoi's method participates in the error of christianism which has as it were chained thought down to the idea of evil and suffering. Human hearts have need of joy and hope; pessimism dries up the heart, whilst mankind draws a continuous, immense force from optimism. Rules proceed from the pessimistic conception; they possess its severe rigor. Liberty turns moral activity into joyfulness and makes a new pleasure out of every good act.

This method discovers a very strong argument in the spectacle of modern society in which morality is so feeble merely because in it moral activity is based on the sterile principle of obligation.

Numerous prescriptions sidetrack good will; narrow prescriptions enchain it. By following its natural inclination it will go infinitely farther than when governed and restricted. We may replace all the moral codes by this formula which is contained in one short statement: "One only right, liberty; one only duty, love." A conscience deeply penetrated by that double maxim, would have no need of any other rule. Besides, to establish rules—is not that merely to expose oneself to the grave danger of omitting the necessary rules?

The ablest casuist is unable to imagine beforehand all the agonies which a conscience may suffer. How can a conscience accustomed to the yoke and security of rules solve unexpected difficulties? The cases of conscience and the scruples of believing Catholics have a still graver inconvenience by painfully tearing up intelligence; these madden them by that fixed idea of orthodoxy. We must learn to look on rules as mere indications; their persuasive energy will exert a singularly deeper and more persuasive influence than the rigor of coactive precepts. To sum up: the simplest formulas are the best, because they are the clearest, because they alone have the plasticity and elasticity compatible with the infinite diversity of life. So that one may sum up æsthetic morality in these two statements: the obligatory respect of the ideal of one's fellowmen; the free realization of the individual ideal.

I shall not restate how and why morality implies and proclaims liberty. What it is well to show here is: how fruitful is moral liberty! When man through education shall have won this twofold habit of directing his life toward the Good and Beautiful and conceiving spontaneously the acts by which he can realize the Ideal, there can be no doubt that in the admirable career opened to the activity of all his being—creative imagination and feeling—he shall find a deep joy in the exertion of his noblest faculties. Moral effort—mere nothing nowadays and during so many centuries past!—will soon equal, if it does not surpass, our materialistic activity. Source of a prodigious multitude of acts which traditional morality, with its narrow spirit, makes impossible, liberty has an admirable virtue of propagation. Passion is the all-powerful motor of the world! In a freed community Good will not be merely a pleasure; it will become a universal function. Every man will have pride and joy in executing the fine actions he will have dreamed; an emulation of kindness and beauty will take the place in people's souls—finally filled by an Ideal—of those follies of amusement in which the best part of our energies is scattered and lost. It will be the end of the dirty reign of gold; the horror of the struggle for life will have disappeared. With liberty both love and the joy of existence will spread over the earth.³⁰

Dream! Chimera! is that what people say? With-

Note 30.—Can we not affirm that there will not remain a trace of the moral law or the civil law in the best of humanity? One and the other presuppose, in truth, those antagonisms, those cupidities and hatreds which will have vanished. An æsthetic society, that is to say, a society perfectly moral, would be anarchistic. What use for a moral code, a civil code, a government and judges, in a world freed from evil?

out doubt every will that raises itself above reality is chimerical. But one must not pronounce the word ideal when one fears to rouse up the idea of dream or chimera.

We shall be asked, also: where do we find a guaranty of the benefits of moral liberty and passion? Nowhere else than in education. In default of metaphysical certainty, morality can not find a more solid support. Outside the spiritualistic system there exists no demonstrated obligation or duty. But the æsthetic feeling, by revealing to us the horror of evil, reveals to us also the value of good and makes us tend toward the good. Education, by cultivating that delicate sense, will make evil more odious to us, good more endearing. Who needs ask more? Æsthetic conception has for its principle the continuous embellishment of the soul, the other aspect of which is the integral development of the individuality. Its force lies in passion, of which it even foresees the excess, for, whatever Horace may have said of it, virtue only exists in excess; excess alone is fruitful! It is through the will to attain superior beauty that human energy, delivered from its fetters, will deploy all its power, will realize the greatest sum of moral good which one is permitted to hope for.

Now, if you ask what guide education will offer to an unsteady soul, we answer: a formula; not of a truth a narrow, imperative formula but a very lofty and at the same time very comprehensive, most persuasive and absolutely free formula. There exists no perfect formula; besides, every one interprets the formula proposed to him according to his own manner, and none equals for us in clearness that one which we ourselves have constructed for our own purpose.

It is scarcely necessary to comprehend in a formula of conduct the elementary social duty of respecting the person of another in everything which to his eyes is essential for his existence—his quiet, his property, his liberty. Regarded in its highest and most complete form, this duty takes on a singularly grave character; that which is the most precious, the most holy, the most respectable in a person is the Ideal. Right and duty materialize themselves as it were in that notion of respect for the Ideal, and therein become more truly moral. But, of necessity, are they not implied in a formula of active morality? and must one fully express them? Without question that would be merely to weigh down and complicate the formula.

"Love one another, that is sufficient" said a Father of the Church. But it is not everything just to love; it is necessary to know how to love. Now love, such as Christian theology has understood it, is readily despotic. Besides, all love—does it not tend toward tyranny? So the brevity, the so precious brevity of that formula of love is not without danger; something more is needed.

"Admire"—that is sufficient. That might be the concise formula of æsthetic morality. Admiration contains love; perhaps it is a more refined sentiment than love and a step more elevated.

Without doubt, too, being loftier, it makes us more intelligent and better, and capable of loving better. But admiration is a sentiment very little active, and the free morality exacts a passionate and energizing will.

"Make yourself loved!"—I would propose that. There speaks a principle of conduct having absolute

definiteness and without doubt also very sure! In order to be loved, is it not necessary that we shall be excellent, that we shall unite in ourselves social virtues and private virtues? Would we be loved, if we were not generous, loyal, indulgent, ready to help, respectful for the persons of others, liberal, free from large blemishes and pure of vices?

A formula like this evidently contains the whole of morality, since it implies a perfect sociability. It allies itself without trouble to the æsthetic ideal, because those virtues which cause one to be beloved are those which constitute moral beauty and render them as it were tangible. It has one grand advantage over the mystic formula "Love, and do what you wish." It may attract even the egoists. If, in effect, love is free, blows where it wills; if it is impossible to constrain us and even at times to accustom certain souls to love, on the other hand there is a universal desire to be loved. Our instincts toward tenderness and also—we must blurt everything out—our taste for domination and our vanity, discover a profound satisfaction in inspiring love. There scarcely exist such beings as do not try to be beloved, and thus doubtless this ideal can be proposed as a universal ideal.³¹

But there are cases in which the conscience directs one to raise oneself higher and break with received opinions, go forward in the face of reproof, of unpopularity—run the risk of dislike. It is when we rebel in this fashion for the good, that we merit most being beloved; nevertheless we are not loved; perhaps we shall be hated and blamed . . . It is beautiful to brave scorn and hatred in order to remain faithful to moral feeling. To be beautiful—that, then, is the fundamental virtue. Make yourself worthy of being loved! That is better worth while than to be beloved. Make yourself worthy of being loved by the finest souls! There then is the last and supreme formula of æsthetic morality.

Still, this does not exclude humble and narrower formulas. If life is an ascent toward beauty, that ascension begins with the most obscure steps of beauty and morality. The formulas we have announced, therefore, constitute a chain of precepts which substitute themselves one for the other according as the individual raises himself in the art of being moral. Far from excluding, they complement each other.³²

Note 31.—The rôle of the great majority of humanity is to make oneself beloved; that is the morality of children, that is the career of women.

Note 32.—Practice of the moral formulas may not, perhaps, avoid all conscientious scruples, although they ought to render them infinitely less frequent than is the case with the morality of duties. It causes an element of passion to enter into moral activity—which singularly facilitates our resolutions. But may not passion cease to speak? But at times must one not be on one's guard against it? What should be the criterion of action then? Evidently, the very loftiest degree of beauty.

The obligation to respect the laws of society, the rights and ideal of the individual is fundamental, and no motive can be permitted to free a person therefrom. This obligation, finding itself satisfied by both of two hypotheses of conduct, between which it is necessary to make a choice, then it is the greater beauty which determines the option; for beauty includes all—morality and charity. If this criterion is lacking there remains a calculation of probabilities taken over from the system of the arithmetic of happiness. The largest sum of probable happiness for one or for many, in last analysis, would be the mark of superiority of any particular action. But this is a field of conceptions concerning which I hope to deliberate some day at greater length.

Æsthetic morality will meet with many foes, and first of all, those minds which are firmly attached to another ideal. This is not the place to discuss the advantages which might be opposed to it by other doctrines: I confine myself here to the exposition of our own. But it is necessary—and by so doing we shall define it still more clearly—to answer an accusation which, formulated long ago against art, also attacks the æsthetic ideal.

A few years ago it was renewed with extreme vigor by M. Brunetière. This learned critic, recently rallied to the standard of Christianity, still pursues what remains of the old paganism in art. Paganism adored "the energies of Nature." These energies horrify M. Brunetière; he is haunted by the idea of pagan sensuality. Art appears to him like a horrible rut, like a frightful debauchery. He says "art is a combination of artifices to arouse sensuality." The art of the eighteenth century more than any other was a "perpetual incitement to debauchery." And M. Brunetière does not hesitate to qualify it as a "pander." In order to move us, does not art always revert to the pleasure of the senses? Only a little further converted, and M. Brunetière would see in art the grand temptation of the demon.

In his eyes Nature is not less an object of suspicion than art; it is fundamentally immoral. And he condemns beauty even so far as to its metaphysical forms. Plato has defined it as "the splendor of truth." That, says M. Brunetière, is "nothing but an immortal idiocy." And this one-sided opinion drags him into historical judgments most unjust. Thus he attributes the immorality of Italy in the sixteenth century to the renaissance of art. Just the contrary, we may affirm that it was in art, after the terrible shock with which philosophy and the Reformation smote the Catholic faith, that Italy found once more an ideal. Along with belief morality lost its unique support; then, if art had not held on high Italian mentality, that sovereign land would have fallen from so great a grandeur, without glory and without return, into the most wretched abjection.

In this quarrel doubtless one must distinguish between art and beauty, the domain of which is infinitely more extensive. But art also ought to be respected. Is it necessary that it should be moral? There a very ancient question lies, and, after all these discussions, opinions are fixed. As for me, the very question itself has no sense. A work of art, moral or not, is always a work of art, and it attains its purpose as soon as it pleases or moves. How could a moral significance disengage itself from a view of the Pantheon or of Notre Dame de Paris? What moral beauty could an assemblage of stones contain? Would they exclude architecture from the family of the arts?³³

Note 33.—And music? . . . If the music of the dance halls does not predispose the soul for great sentiments, yet does the noble music of Beethoven excite in us, at least for a moment, an enthusiasm worthy of itself. But it is very evident that an assemblage of sounds has no precise signification and does not include any moral indication. So that architecture and music have only this effect of preparing the soul by inculcating the taste for great and beautiful things, in order to receive a moral culture. But that is only what can be said of all beautiful works of art. The moral sentiment which indirectly it helps to form, suffices, then, to justify it, whatever may be the subject and purpose of the work.

That art which is filled with a moral idea is not superior in itself to sensual art. But since it produces more general and beneficial effects it is more complete. Entirely sensual art is hardly intellectual; on the contrary, moral art is all thought, sentiment, ideal. It is as great a folly to say that art pacifies all subjects as to affirm, as do certain writers of the passing diabolic school, that one should be immoral intentionally. But one can be sure that a sensual excitation becomes singularly attenuated when it is produced under the form of a noble work of art.

Let us not fear to go to the bottom of things; definitively then, art solicits only one form of sensuality, sexual sensuality. But this only the baser stage of love.³⁴

As soon as sexual love reaches its integral development it creates the family. Love of children is one of the agents of sociability, for society is necessary in order to protect them. Thus sexuality is the first stage of the social life and consequently of morality. This great horror of sensuality in art presents I scarcely know what that is morbid!—the final agony of that Christian mysticism which at times constrains us still. But is not that a singular prudishness which proscribes the nudities of art in a society which tolerates, entertains and protects thousands of prostitutes? Surely a whole people of nude statues would offend far less the purity of eyes and souls!

But it is necessary to regard sensuality from still another aspect. It is not an indifferent element in the æsthetic development of the individual. Pleasure is a bait and moral culture uses that bait. It is the entirely sensual enjoyment of pure form that renders the mind capable of enjoying pure idea, and it is the joy in the pure idea which rises to that

Note 34.—At the last analysis is not sexual sensuality the vulgar criterion which distinguishes the good from the beautiful? The people consider as good whatever helps to insure the conservation of beings; the people call beautiful whatever solicits or contributes to reproduction; the flower is merely an organ of generation.

delicate and wise voluptuousness of the moral action in which the endeavor of the soul toward the beautiful culminates.³⁵

Art is not all there is of beauty. It only occupies a corner of that infinite realm. Even if art should succumb under the anathemas of hypocritical prudishness or intolerant beliefs, beauty would none the less remain the most tangible and loftiest form of morality and the purest ideal of existence. It is not in the power of any doctrine to divest a good action of the æsthetic value and break the indissoluble harmony of the good and the beautiful. What difference does it make if art in its entirety and all nature should attack morality? One fact is ascertained, indisputable, decisive; there, where no beauty is, there is no morality either!

As to art, was it not an ardent spiritualist, Cousin, who wrote these lines "Art by itself is essentially moral and religious, for unless it would admit failure of its own law, its own proper genius, it everywhere expresses in its works eternal beauty"? Every work of art, he also said, raises the soul toward the infinite. That emotion which produces the beautiful turns the soul in the same direction; it is this beneficent emotion that art produces for humanity.

Yes, of a certainty, beneficent and likewise profoundly educational. And it is beneath that new aspect that we shall now consider the æsthetic emotion.³⁶

Note 35.—Just exactly because beauty takes hold of us through the senses, because it exerts an immediate action on our physiological constitution, art has been called upon to play in moral pathology a rôle still difficult to determine, but a sure one. Medicine has already obtained some astonishing cures from music. Hygienists in future will go much farther, no doubt, and will suppress or attenuate by the culture of æsthetic emotions both madness and the criminal instincts.

Note 36.—Moral or not, a work of art is neither more nor less artistic. This point once gained, one ought to affirm that æsthetic art includes a certain transformation of artistic inspiration; at any rate, it implies new directions for art and these will be moral and social directions.

To be continued.

LITTLE BLACK SAMMY

Move ovah, honey,
Wha'd you mean
Takin' up all de room in de bed?
Hyeah come mammy
Clean tired to de bone,
Whah she gwine to lay huh hed?

Little pink nightie
Wif ribbon run in,
Jes' plum matches
Dat little black skin;
Move ovah, honey,
Wha'd you mean
Takin' up all the room in de bed?

Little eyes stirrin' an' open'n wide,
Cain't you see you's
Ovah on mammy's side?
Hyeah what he say,
My little black Sammy:
"Jes gittin' a place
All wahm fer mammy."

David Blair Scott